

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
Ethan School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** February 21, 2006

**Date of Report:** March 14, 2006

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- State data tables A & D

- Screenings
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys
- Child count
- Needs assessments
- Teacher assistance team (TAT): referral vs. non referral information
- Information on home school students

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee stated the district's ongoing child find system meets the needs of students with disabilities. Based on IDEA requirements, the steering committee indicated the district has no private schools. Based on IDEA requirements, the district is in compliance with the one student placed at Mitchell Area Adjustment Training Center. Based on Table D, the district is making progress toward meeting the state's performance goals and indicators.

Based on suspension and expulsion data, the steering committee reports the district meets requirements by reviewing and analyzing discipline data and revising policies and procedures.

The steering committee stated all staff meets certification and licensure requirements. Based on staff surveys and needs assessments completed within the district, the district provides professional development for all staff and therefore meets requirements.

### **Out of compliance**

The steering committee reported four of eight initial files reviewed did not have written referral documentation.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice**

Through observation and interviews, the monitoring team determined the following opportunities for students and teachers as promising practice in the Ethan school district.

#### **Opportunities for Students**

The district is providing several opportunities for the students to increase their reading skills. A reading time called Drop Everything and Read has been instituted school wide for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The elementary students use Reading Counts as a supplementary program. The middle school and high school students keep track of pages read and meet goals based on pages.

Several cross-age projects have been implemented. The third and fifth grade are presently working on a computer project where the fifth graders are partnered with third graders to teach and assist with the completion of a power point presentation. This project is an outcome of the fifth grade teacher mentoring the third grade teacher. The mentoring has led to cross-age projects which both teachers plan to continue. The science classes also invite lower grades to view projects, look at outcomes of experiments and learn how to use microscopes.

Ethan school district has an inclusive preschool within the school building. This program provides instruction for students ages four and five. Five year olds may attend the program free of charge. Based on observation, the preschool is providing age appropriate activities and working to include children with disabilities to ensure these students have the skills necessary to start kindergarten.

## Opportunities for Teachers

Inservices have been provided for teachers to increase their skills in teaching reading across all grade levels. The middle school and high school teachers have attended a workshop dedicated to teaching reading in the content areas and elementary teachers have been trained in guided reading techniques and also have attended other sessions such as Readers Theater.

Ethan school district is working to promote understanding of data and how it can be used to increase the performance of students. The entire staff attends workshops to review and analyze state testing data.

The middle school and high school teachers meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss student and curriculum issues. This time is given to the teachers during the regular school day. The elementary teachers are provided with a similar opportunity during teacher meetings, but it is not a regularly scheduled meeting.

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee, data for General Supervision meets requirements with the exception of an out of district placement at Mitchell Area Adjustment Training Center (MAATC). (Refer to information under needs improvement.)

### **Needs Improvement**

The monitoring team noted file information was not complete for a student placed at Mitchell Area Adjustment Training Center. The annual review meeting was held on September 1, 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to develop an IEP/ISP. The current IEP/ISP does not contain the required IEP content even though district personnel were present at the meeting.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Suspension and expulsion data
- Table I
- File reviews
- IDEA application

### **Meets requirements**

Based on survey data and Table I, the steering committee indicated the district is providing FAPE to all children with disabilities. Based on the Suspension and Expulsion Data, the district has had no suspensions or expulsions and meets all requirements.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Two, Free Appropriate Public Education.

### **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- State data tables
- Surveys
- Student file reviews
- Comprehensive plan

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee indicated in seven of seven initial evaluations, documentation of informed parental consent was available. Parental consent for re-evaluation was obtained in seven of seven student files reviewed.

All tests listed on the prior notice/consent were administered in 14 of 14 files reviewed.

Based on files and surveys reviewed, the steering committee reported appropriate written notice and informed consent were obtained before assessments were administered as part of an evaluation or reevaluation. Based on the review of files, the district meets ensures proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. The district uses an informal process and team to review existing data before reassessing.

The steering committee reports prior notice/consent was acquired before evaluations were administered in seven of eight student files reviewed. (This includes consent for transition evaluation) Parent input into the re-evaluation process was documented in two of eight files reviewed. 89% of parents surveyed indicated the test results have been used to help plan the child's IEP.

### **Out of compliance**

Based on review of files the steering committee reported the district is out of compliance in the area of parental input into evaluation/reevaluation process.

The steering committee noted in four of 14 files reviewed, tests were given that were not listed on the prior notice/consent for evaluation.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee for those items meeting requirements for appropriate evaluation. The monitoring team also would like to move the items in the area of out of compliance to meets requirements. Through review of files, interviews and observation, the monitoring team notes in eight of nine district files show evidence of parental input into the evaluation process and the prior notice to parents matches the actual evaluations administered.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- State data tables L & M

### **Meets requirements**

Based on file reviews and parent surveys the steering committee indicated the district ensures parents are informed of their parental rights under IDEA. Based on student file reviews the district ensures that the parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought. Based on the district comprehensive plan, the district ensures the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified.

Based on district's comprehensive plan, the steering committee indicated the district provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

Based on information from Table L, the steering committee reports the district has had no complaints and has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaint actions.

Based on Table M, the steering committee stated the district has not had any due process hearings within the past 5 years and has policies and procedures in place for responding to requests for due process that ensures compliance.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with steering committee data for Principle Four, Procedural Safeguards as meeting requirements.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data sources used:**

- File reviews
- Surveys

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee reported in four of six files reviewed of student's turning 14 years old, the prior notice invited the student, considered agency participation and indicated transition as a purpose for the meeting. Nine students surveyed stated they were invited to their IEP meetings, two indicated they were not invited and two students did not know. In five of six files reviewed, transition evaluation was conducted to gather information regarding the student's interests. In two of four student files reviewed, representatives from other agencies were invited to participate in the IEP meetings for students of transition age. Based on file reviews, the district ensures written notice is provided for all IEP meetings and contains the required content.

A regular educator was present at IEP meetings in 14 of 14 student files reviewed. 16 of 18 regular educators surveyed indicated the school had procedures in place in order to help determine student's needs for extended school year services.

Eight of nine parents surveyed indicated they get information concerning their child from each teacher at the IEP meeting.

The steering committee reported three parents surveyed indicated teachers set high goals and expect a lot out of their child and five parents disagreed. Eight of nine parents surveyed felt the services decided on at the IEP meeting were started right away. Teachers do not receive copies of the IEPs, but have access and are aware of student's goals, disabilities, and necessary modifications. 100% of teachers surveyed are made aware of the goals and objectives and needed modifications for students on IEPs.

Based on file reviews and parent, student, and teacher surveys, the steering committee reported district meets all requirements by ensuring the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities. The present levels of performance in 10 of 14 files reviewed contained specific skills in the student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. Present levels of performance are linked to functional evaluation in 10 of 14 files reviewed. Annual goals are linked to the present levels of performance in 10 of 14 files reviewed. Four of 14 IEPs reviewed consistently contained skill based, measurable/observable annual goals.

The steering committee reported a statement of transition services/activities was documented in 2 of 4 files of student's age 16 years old or younger if appropriate three of four IEPs reviewed for students 16 years old or younger, documented transition goals, services and/or activities needed by the student. These services were linked to the student's life planning outcomes, present levels of performance and transition assessments. Student centered life planning outcomes for employment and independent living were documented in two of six files reviewed of students turning 16 years old. A course of study was developed for students beginning at age 16 in five of six files reviewed. The course of study for five students included classes, including specific electives that directly linked to the life planning outcomes of the student.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Five, Individualized Education Program as meeting requirements. In eight of nine files reviewed, the content requirements were included in the student's IEP. One IEP written by MAATC did not meet IEP content requirements. (Refer to Principle One needs improvement.)

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Data tables
- Surveys
- Needs assessment

### **Meets requirements**

Based on file reviews, data tables, surveys, and needs assessments, the district meets all requirements by providing the least restrictive environment with the supports students need for successful participation.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Six, Least Restrictive Environment.